

SOCIALIST STUDIES

No. 34

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SAFETY OR PROFIT?

TEN YEARS OF SOCIALIST STUDIES

**OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE SOCIALIST PARTY
OF GREAT BRITAIN**

Communications to: General Secretary,
71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB

SOCIALISM NEEDS YOU! AND YOU NEED SOCIALISM!

The Problem

Without Socialists there can be no Socialist political organisation and no Socialism. The Socialist Party of Great Britain needs members in order to carry out Party work. We need writers, speakers and distributors of our journal, Socialist Studies, and other Party literature. We need committed Socialists who reject capitalism and accept the urgent need for a new society based upon production for direct social use, not for profit. And we need members who accept and will be prepared to defend the SPGB's Object and Declaration of Principles.

The Solution

The solution is simple. If you agree with our analysis of capitalism, the Socialist objective and the political means required to establish common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society, then you are already a Socialist. But individual Socialists cannot alone make a marked impact upon Capitalism. The struggle for Socialism has to be an organised one and this requires collective action by the working class.

This is why a Socialist political party is vitally important. It focuses attention on the class struggle and enables workers to act with unity and strength. If you are a Socialist then the first step is to join the Socialist Party of Great Britain. We are not a sect or a cult. There are no intellectuals in the Party, only intelligent men and women who share the same class interests, Socialist ideas and Socialist objective. However, we only want members who agree with the Socialist case and if you do agree with us then we want you as a member.

What Next?

If you agree with the Socialist case then the next step is to apply for membership. We have no leaders. No one will tell you what to do and to think. All we expect is political commitment and enthusiasm to work with other Socialists to achieve the establishment of Socialism. Joining the Socialist Party of Great Britain will be the single most important political decision you will make. One more Socialist is one less worker voting for capitalist parties like Labour, the Conservatives and the Social Democrats. A Socialist party with a growing membership will make an increasing impact on the political class struggle. If you want a world without unemployment, exploitation, war, poverty, discomfort and inequality you should seriously consider joining us. **ALL ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP** to: The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB.

SOCIALISM: THE FUTURE

There are two perspectives from which to view the future of Socialism. First, a negative and pessimistic perspective. And second, a positive and optimistic one.

The negative and pessimistic view sees the working class permanently chained. Prometheus like, to the capitalist class. From this bleak perspective workers are seen as forever being exploited and living their lives in the shadow of poverty, unemployment and war.

The positive and optimistic view sees the working class as a revolutionary force in history eventually becoming a class *"for itself"*, capable of politically abolishing Capitalism and establishing Socialism. Or, as Marx wrote, a class creating *"a community of free individuals (who) carry (...) on their work with the means of production in common ..."* (**Capital Vol I**).

The question of Socialism's future rests with the working class and no-one else. Are they cut out for Socialism? Or do they wear *"radical chains"*? (**Marx Collected Works** iii 186). Are they to remain mediocre and their minds made dull by the consumer fantasy world of the advertising industry with its game shows, celebrities, soap operas, commercial sport and pornography? Or are they going to use their imagination and energy and work to achieve a practical alternative to commodity production, markets, buying and selling, wages and salaries, and employment? These are vitally important questions to consider as we leave behind a century of barbarism; a century of capitalism.

Socialists cannot predict the future. We have no crystal balls, astrological charts or mathematical models of the economy. What we can say is that without the establishment of Socialism the anarchic movement of capitalism will pass from one economic crisis to the next. Only with the introduction of common ownership and democratic control of the means of production by all

problems currently facing workers will not exist, and poverty will give way to comfort, privilege to equality and slavery to freedom.

Socialists have to be optimists. The poet, Shelley, writing in the early 19th century at the time of the working class's infancy, was also an optimist. In a poem, **Prometheus Unbound**, he inverted the Greek myth of Prometheus being chained to a rock for eternity as a punishment for giving fire to the human race. He freed Prometheus with the words "*To defy Power, which seems omnipotent*". Such a sentiment should be the rallying cry for the working class as it enters into the 21st century.

THE REALITY OF CAPITALISM

Almost 2,500 redundancies were announced on Tuesday 2 November 1999 as Tony Blair claimed that New Labour had created a stable economy. Prudential cut 1,400 on top of the 4,000 made redundant in June 1999. British American Tobacco sacked 550, as did Cooper Menvier. The problems at Marks and Spencers will add more to the dole. What politicians say and the reality of capitalism is not the same.

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WHO ARE THE WORKING CLASS?

When John Prescott stood up to ask a question of the last government, Nicholas Ridley used to shout out: "*Gin and Tonic*". This spiteful remark was to remind Prescott that, though he might be in a "*gentleman's club*", he was and still is marked by his class. As a ship's steward, Prescott would have had to pay servile respect to Ridley's wealthy friends travelling first class to destinations only the rich can afford to enjoy.

Prescott obviously has a problem with class. Three years ago he and the presenter, John Humphrys, had a discussion on the subject "*Why are you disparaging the middle class*". Prescott told Humphrys "*I'm middle class, you're middle class*". "*I thought you were working class*" replied Humphrys. "*Well, I was once, but being a member of Parliament, I'm pretty middle class.*"

According to Prescott, class is all about social mobility. Nicholas Ridley may have come from a superior social background, Humphrys may have been to Oxbridge, but by being an MP Prescott believed he had joined them at the same table.

This fits in with Blair's vision of a classless society based on merit. According to New Labour, it is not who you are, nor what wealth you possess, but how good you are. The cream is to be allowed to rise to the top, even though cream is often rich and thick. Or, to put it another way, if a gifted teenager in an inner city estate has the ability to go to Oxford, go to the Bar, or become a Minister of State, then nothing, neither background nor money, should stand in the way. As New Labour guru, Philip Gould, argued: instead of the Working Class there should be the Working Class, the ability to climb out, socially, from your background into another, or in the case of Prescott, from serving at the table to being served at the table.

From the Socialist perspective, the pretensions of Prescott, the classless vision

of Blair and the social climbing of Gould are shallow and unhelpful in understanding capitalism and the class relationships found in capitalism. The children of the rich get the best education. And inherited wealth means that they will always be at the finishing line before the children of the working class have got off the starting blocks.

So, who are the working class?

A class is a set of people united by common interests, or, to put it another way, material interests, or wealth interests, or bread and butter interests - the interest makes the class.

The economic or wealth interests of a class, though they may clash as far as individuals are concerned, are, as against the interests of another class, a united and solid whole.

We do not intend, at this early stage, to go into the matter of what causes the division of society into classes. It is sufficient for the present to say that society to-day is divided into two classes, one of which is called the working class, because its members have to work for a living, and the other of which is called the capitalist class, because those who compose it own the raw resources, factories, transport and communication and distribution points, and use them for the purpose of making profit.

Now the line between those who have to work and those who do not is not sufficiently clear for us to explain by it the class position of every individual, neither is the line between those who possess and those who do not possess. Some capitalists work in some capacity or another without becoming members of the working class, while workers with shares in companies are not capitalists.

Nevertheless, the fact of possession or non-possession at bottom determines

which class a person belongs to, and sets up those distinctions by which we shall show who are the members of the working class.

Since people can only live on the wealth which is produced, and since all the means of producing that wealth are in the possession of some people to the exclusion of others, it is clear that those who possess and those who do not possess are placed in very different circumstances.

Those who possess have in their hands the means of production and, more than this, they are able to deny others access to the means of life. To draw upon our common knowledge, the only terms upon which the non-possessors are allowed access to the means of production are that they must become the employees of the owners. In other words, they must sell to the owners their mental and physical energies, the working capacity which is contained in their bodies.

This is the distinction which marks off the member of the working class from the capitalist. The former is compelled to sell his or her labour power in order to live. In comparison, what else matters? What does it matter whether that labour power is skilled or unskilled or whether it is sold for a wage or a salary? What does it matter if labour power is sold to make computer chips on a production line or to write computer programmes? What does it matter whether workers are paid a high or low wage, or whether professional, clerical or so-called manual worker? And what does it matter if the workers read the Times, the Mail or the Sun, or whether they listen to opera or pop music?

The essential thing is that members of the working class have to sell their labour power in order to live. Beside this salient fact all else pales into insignificance. You cannot take Working out of the Working Class. The differences of dress, pay, education, habits, work, and so on that are to be observed among those who have to sell their working power in order to live are as nothing compared with the differences which mark them off from capitalists.

No matter how well paid the worker is, or how many have to obey his commands, he himself has a master. He has to render obedience to another, to someone who can send him adrift to endure the torments of unemployment. Philip Gould would not last a year without employment and neither would Prescott but the class they serve do. That is the difference. Because workers have to sell their labour-power their whole life must be lived within prescribed limits. Their release from the need to labour is short and seldom, they have no security of livelihood: they have always to fear that a rival may replace them. Political gurus and Ministers of State also do not have long life spans.

On the other hand, the capitalist, because he is able to deny workers direct access to the means of life, is therefore able to compel them to surrender their labour-power to him and is relieved from the necessity of working. His conditions of life are essentially different from those of the worker - different, but not in one or two particulars but in practically every particular. Ease and luxury are only the most obvious features of a life which has little in common with that of the working class.

For the capitalist there is the life of leisure and freedom, and for the working class toil and wage slavery; for the capitalist a smart address, private health care, good food, someone to park the car, look after the children, clean the house, manage the investments, advise on fitness, look after his political interests, and a class to produce his wealth. For the workers, it is second best. And workers will continue to receive second best until they politically and consciously replace capitalism with Socialism.

SONG OF THE MEN OF ENGLAND

Men of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay ye low?
The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps.

Shelley

WHAT HAS THE SPGB DONE?

"What has the Socialist Party of Great Britain done during the ninety-five years of its existence?" This is a question which is often put to Socialists. The answer is quite simple. We have remained in existence.

In 1904 what was the position of the working class? There were strikes, unemployment, poverty, war and the promise by social reformers to solve them. Workers were forced on the labour market, forced to sell their mental and physical ability to work for a wage or a salary, and then be exploited in the productive process. This social reality has not changed.

Unfortunately workers still look to politicians to solve social problems. Workers, confused about their own class interests, vote for the Tories, Labour or SDP. They fall for empty slogans and dishonest promises. Workers follow when they should be thinking for themselves.

In the face of the slow and painful political development of the working class why have socialists bothered to keep socialist ideas alive?

Being a socialist brings with it political responsibility. Once a problem is understood and the means to resolve it is identified, then not to do something about it would be perverse and indolent. It is like questioning why we breathe.

And even if the SPGB did not exist it would be necessary to invent it. Socialist ideas do not come from nowhere. They derive from the class struggle between employers and employees. The struggle itself is a result of the stranglehold by the narrow objective of profit-making on the possibilities contained within the forces of production and distribution. Capitalism holds back the creative and technical potential of men and women to create a social system fit for human beings. The conflict between profit and social need can only be resolved with the establishment of Socialism.

So the SPGB is made up of active socialists aware of the social limitation of capitalism and the problems caused by commodity production and exchange. We are convinced that Socialism, being based upon a harmony of interest between free men and women, can provide the stable social framework within which social needs will be met for all of society.

Socialist understanding makes it quite clear that under capitalism, the working class, the exploitation it experiences and the social problems it faces, will not go away. Social problems like war and unemployment are immune to social reforms. The futility of social-reform politics flows from its inability to comprehend the cause of social problems and that while the cause, capitalism, remains, so will the problems. Consequently, while there is a working class either politically ignorant or enlightened, Socialism will always be on the agenda. Class conflict and class politics only ends with the establishment of Socialism. Blair's "*end of class conflict*" is simply empty rhetoric.

Politicians and social reformers have been unable to make capitalism run in the interests of all of society. They have failed and will continue to fail. So it is reasonable to assume that at some stage in their social development workers will come to reflect in greater depth on the political childishness of letting someone else do their thinking for them. Confusion about class interest will give way to a rational reflection about capitalism, and how and why it causes social problems and denies social needs from being met. Workers will increasingly want to have control over what they produce and for whom. They will want to organise their own social affairs rather than being dictated to by others.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, has no option but to keep on impressing upon workers the need for Socialism while refuting the shallow and anti-working class ideas of our opponents. As the social problems of capitalism become more pronounced, particularly the contradiction between what society could produce and what capitalism allows to be produced, the class conflict will intensify and the work of spreading socialist ideas and making socialists will become easier. 9

POPULATION CONTROL AND CAPITALISM

Asking the right questions is an important starting point in trying to place into logical and factual sequence the problems facing the world. People worried about rising populations begin with questioning childbirth in developing and developed capitalist countries and come to the conclusion that, given access to health care, including family planning, women would take up the opportunity of controlling their fertility, population would come down and the world would be able to match human beings to food production. This was the not very original proposition put forward by the Green Party Population Policy group in **The Independent** (14 July 1999). The policy has gained widespread support except from religious groups, notably the Catholic Church, and from some in developing countries, usually in the rural regions, who see women controlling fertility as meaning the loss of male power.

However, the policy has one serious drawback. The policy is to be enacted while still retaining capitalism, class relations, commodity production and exchange for profit, and competition between nation states. In retaining capitalism and the profit motive, resources will not be matched to need.

Socialists ask a different question. "*Why*", we ask "*is there poverty?*" There is certainly nothing natural and inevitable about people starving or going without what they need in order to live worthwhile lives as human beings. When we consider the capitalist class of each and every nation state on the planet we do not see want, hunger and starvation. Quite the contrary. Even in the poorest developing countries the ruling class live well. Population control is never offered to this class.

Global poverty is a real problem. Information from the United Nations Department of Public Information states that out of the 5.6 billion people on the planet, more than a billion live in a state of absolute poverty. Some 550 million go to bed hungry each night. More than 1.5 billion lack access to clean

drinking water and sanitation. Life expectancy is short. In Sub-Saharan Africa, people rarely live beyond the age of 50. Education is virtually non-existent. A billion adults are functionally illiterate. Infant mortality rates are about 175 per 1,000 live births in Africa and close to 100 in India (Poverty, ed. C Donnellan, Independence 1998).

Socialists point out, supported with statistics provided by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, that with the application of modern techniques of production and transport, food, education, health provision, sanitation, etc could be freely available to everyone. What prevents the world's population from having direct access to what it needs in order to live are four things. First: there is the institution of private property ownership protected by the machinery of government. Second: there is the primary drive of capitalism to produce only for profit. Third: the division of the planet into competing nation states. And, fourth: there is the support given by millions of workers to capitalist politicians and therefore to the continuation of capitalism.

The question posed by those concerned with population control is not in fact the right question. Population within capitalism is not the problem any more than birth control is an answer. The question should be directed at why food production is not being increased and why transport is not being used to move food around the globe to meet people's needs, and why health provision is a commodity going only to those who can afford it. If these questions should give food for thought, questions should also be asked about the millions of unemployed people whose work could be used to provide more goods and services. In answering these questions we pass from the idealistic reformers, feudal religious institutions and pious charities to politics - the politics of class ownership, class control, class interests and class struggle.

The technical problem of producing enough food has long since been resolved. With this in mind, Socialists then ask what social system would best provide the framework in which food and health care are directly provided to answer

people's needs. And we conclude that the solution can only exist within common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society.

What stands in the way of solving the real social problems facing the human species is capitalism. Food is produced only for the market. Capitalism is an anarchic form of production as can be seen in the food mountains of the European Community, the destruction of foodstuffs and the deliberate way land is taken out of production. It is the social system which is the problem, not the size of the population. If access to resources, like health care, including family planning service, is to be freely available to all who need them, no matter where they live, then the route travelled along by the social reformers and charities must be abandoned for the Socialist one.

MEDIA STATISTICS

The number of the world's wealthiest capitalists, whose net wealth is equivalent to that of the poorest 50 per cent of the world's population is 447. (**Independent on Sunday**, 19 September 1999)

JAPANESE CAPITALISM: CRISIS, DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

Japanese capitalism is in depression. As a consequence the suicide rate has risen. Last year suicides totalled 32,863, an increase of 35% on 1997 (Times, 16 July 1999).

There was a sharp increase in the number of suicides by men in their forties and fifties, the age groups hardest hit by "*restructuring*" or unemployment. The figures show that 713 corporate managers killed themselves, a 38% increase on the previous year. Suicides linked to economic problems increased by 70% to 6,058.

Workers in Japan cannot understand why the economy is in depression and why 4.9% of the population cannot find work. They are bewildered at events. They despair at the unpredictability and hardship they face.

The correspondent from the **Times** wrote that workers are buying books which reflect the economic depression, titles such as **Japan's Failures**, **Japan's Crisis** and **The Essence of Our Country's Failure**. They link the current problems of Japanese capitalism with their own predicament as wage slaves. They erroneously believe that they have an interest in the economic performance of the country and a common aim with employers in Japan having a competitive edge over its rivals. They think they need employers and that somehow employers are indispensable in production and distribution.

All these perspectives are wrong. Unfortunately one useful pamphlet not being sold in Japan is **Capitalism in Crisis** published by the Socialist Party of Great Britain. If the SPGB had the funds a Japanese edition would be published to hand to workers from Japan in Hyde Park. Unemployment is only possible in a social system of employment and the exploitation of employees by employers. In a social system of free and voluntary labour producing goods directly for human consumption, unemployment would be inconceivable.

Our pamphlet contains good advice to the working class. Capitalism is anarchic and stumbles from one economic crisis and depression to another. For workers this means periodic unemployment and discomfort. No country is immune from crises. However, crises are not natural. They develop out of the social relationships found in capitalism. They are as necessary to capitalism as tornadoes are to the weather system. Crises rein back the potential of the techniques of production to meet the needs of all society in conformity with the narrow antisocial constraints of producing for profit.

So what can workers do? First, they can start by understanding capitalism. It is a social system with a historic beginning and an historic end. The means of production are owned by a parasitic minority class called capitalists. Commodity production and exchange takes place only if there is a profit to be made. Workers are propertyless. In order to live they have to sell their ability to work for a wage and salary on the labour market. Their ability to work is sold as a commodity and exploited by employers who pay workers less social wealth than they actually produce. The wages system not only rations what workers need to the limit imposed by their pay packet, it is wage slavery. Just like every other form of slavery, workers work a free period for their employer. But unlike the chattel slave, when employers do not need workers because they are unprofitable to employ, redundant workers expelled from the production process. This is capitalism.

Second, workers can begin to question the way in which they actually live. Workers can question the need for employers, employment, the labour market, the buying and selling of their ability to work, wages and salaries, and commodity production. These are the most liberating questions workers can pose for to answer them correctly takes workers into the political struggle against capitalism as Socialists.

Third, workers should tie all these questions together and pose the next question: what is the alternative? How do we think beyond private property ownership, the profit motive, competition and a minority directing production

for their own gain at the expense of the rest of society? Here we ask for a leap of the imagination. Contrast this class system with common ownership of the means of life, production directly for need, co-operation and democratic control of what is produced and for whom. Contrast capitalism with Socialism and it is clear that we could live differently and organise production differently. There is an alternative: Socialism.

And, finally, there is the question of the practical and democratic political means to achieve the Socialist alternative to capitalism: a Socialist party, the formation of a Socialist majority; Socialist delegates being sent to Parliament to gain control of the machinery of government and the abolition of class, class relationships, class interest and the class struggle. These are the practical means for securing Socialism.

If workers want to avoid further economic crises and their unpleasant social consequences like suicide, then they have no option but to start asking serious questions about capitalism and, in answering these questions, begin to organise for replacing capitalism with Socialism.

PUBLICATIONS. 2000.

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EMPLOYMENT: DEGRADING, SERVILE AND HUMILIATING

Marx was once asked by one of his daughters what he considered the most unpleasant aspect of working class existence. He did not say poverty or exploitation but, instead, their "*degradation*" as wage slaves. Marx would have been aware that some factory owners adopted a system of "*shaming*" their employees. Offenders were made to carry cards round their necks setting out their "*crime*". In some cases a heavy stone was to be worn around the neck: both practices served to humiliate offenders and was intended to "*shame*" them enough so they would not repeat the offence. Recently, the Helmsham History Society published the 21 rules of 1851 imposed by the Masters for the Workpeople of Water-Foot Mill, near Haslington. The rules, which workers had to obey, consisted of numerous fines and punishments. Degradation and humiliation still exist but in more sophisticated ways; they are part of the techniques of power exercised by employers against those whom they employ.

The humiliation of being employed surfaces in the media from time to time. **The Times** - whose owner produces for the working class a bread and circus diet of pornography, shallow celebrities, soap operas, pop stars, commercial sport and other superficial trash - recently provided the case for Socialism a great service by drawing attention to the plight of workers in Japan. We quote the article *Japanese firms rewrite rules of employment* by Robert Whymant, a journalist based in Tokyo with the comment that surely workers must realise that there is more to offer them in a classless society than the humiliation, degradation and alienation they face under capitalism.

When Toshiyuki Sakai was assigned to a desk in a windowless room at head office, with no outside telephone line and no work to do, he knew his days with Sega Enterprises, the video-game maker, were numbered.

Workers were sent to this room - officially called the "persona room", but known to employees as the "company jail" when Sega had no further need

for them and wanted them to quit, according to Mr Sakai, a 35 year old quality controller. A week or two idling in the room was enough to persuade most people to accept "voluntary retirement."

However, Mr Sakai endured three months of "solitary" as he calls it, until Sega finally fired him in March for "insufficient work ability". He is suing the company for unfair dismissal.

Though news reports of these tactics surprised many Japanese, Mr Sakai's experience was hardly unique. Until a few years ago, most big Japanese companies shied away from making employees redundant. The so-called "jobs for life" system, which rewarded loyalty with security, was sacrosanct. But the world's second largest economy is undergoing a quiet and painful social transformation. Recession, falling profits and the struggle to remain globally competitive are forcing corporate Japan to rethink the tradition of employment for life. More and more big companies are biting the bullet, "restructuring" and cutting payrolls, making western investors happy by driving up unemployment. The latest unemployment figure of 4.9% is a post war record.

For the Japanese worker, being cast out of the company womb is traumatic, the more so as there is little scope for changing jobs in mid-career and no provision for the long-term unemployed. The methods used to get workers to leave the company of their own accord often border on harassment, typically, unwanted employees are deprived of job title, desk and dignity - and Japan's docile "house unions" accept such abuses.

Employment: degrading, servile and humiliating, whether in 1851 or 1999.

THE EAST TIMOR BLOOD BATH - AN OBJECT LESSON?

The SPGB has often been accused of being naive and over-optimistic in arguing for the use of parliament to achieve Socialism. We are told that the capitalist class would use force, bring out the bayonets, ban the party, cancel elections, etc. And we expect that those who argue along these lines will now cite the experience of East Timor, just as they have previously, mistakenly, cited other examples such as the brutal crushing of the Paris Commune and more recently that of the Allende regime in Chile.

Consider some of the facts. In East Timor, where a referendum was held under UN auspices and with implied international guarantees, an overwhelming majority, about 80%, voted to be free of Indonesian rule. Immediately afterwards, Indonesian forces - both the Army and the semi-official militias - attacked, terrorised and massacred the unarmed and defenceless East Timorese people.

So the argument will go: if workers merely rely on a majority vote for Socialism, the capitalist class would use whatever means they could - fair or foul - to crush this threat to their interests. But that argument fails for several reasons.

First, neither in East Timor nor Chile nor any other situation cited as an analogy has Socialism ever been actually on the agenda.

Secondly, it is inconceivable that there would be an overwhelming majority voting for Socialism in just one country, whilst all around workers remained supporters of capitalism and willing recruits in capitalism's dirty work. Class-consciousness must have become widespread before Socialism is really on the agenda.

From this it follows that, once there is widespread support for Socialism amongst the working class, it would be difficult in the extreme for a beleaguered and unpopular minority to mobilise police and armed forces to crush a movement so widely supported. Any attempt to do this would be likely to cause a mutiny, a revolt in which the armed forces that the capitalist class hoped to rely on might well turn against them and their system. In short, once a sufficient majority of the working class - which includes the friends and families of workers in uniform, the police, army, etc - once this majority consciously supports Socialism, the armed forces will become increasingly unreliable as defenders of the class system. They are, after all, merely mercenaries, doing a job for which they are paid.

The fact is that the East Timor blood bath, as a precedent, in no way counters our case which is that to achieve Socialism we need, first and foremost, a majority of Socialists. Then, only by gaining effective control of government, can we ensure that the armed forces will support and not oppose the actions needed to dispossess the capitalist class. That is what we mean, in our Declaration of Principles, when we insist that it is through taking control of the power of government that *"the machinery of government, including the armed forces, ... may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation ..."*.

Those who fancy that Socialism can be achieved by a general strike, a mass occupation of factories or a lockout of the capitalists are disregarding the high probability that the government and its armed forces would resist and defend the class system, tooth and nail. The state exists primarily to defend the class interests of the property-owners and in the last resort to defend the class system. That is why Marx and Engels asserted in the **Communist Manifesto** that *"every class struggle is a political struggle"*. The political battleground is crucial.

WHO WILL TEACH THE PROFESSORS?

[The following text is taken from a letter sent to the editor of the Marx Memorial Library following an article in its magazine by Professor David McLellan on **The Communist Manifesto** (Bulletin of the Marx Memorial Library No 129, pp4-11, 1998).]

We were rather disappointed by David McLellan's article on **The Communist Manifesto** and would like to take issue with some of his points.

First, nationalisation and "*state socialism*". He refers to the "*demise of state socialism of the Soviet form*" and "*the sort of socialism via state bureaucracy which was the legacy of the Attlee government of 1945*".

Like many of the capitalist Left, he apparently believes that the phrase "*state socialism*" makes some sort of sense. But the whole notion of "*state socialism*" as a form of transition to full-blown communism has been tested to destruction and thoroughly discredited. Even in 1918, Lenin was arguing:

Reality tells us that state capitalism would be a step forward. In a small space of time we could achieve state capitalism in Russia, that would be a victory. (29 April 1918, quoted in **Lenin, On State Capitalism During the Transition to Socialism**, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1983.)

Even for Lenin, state capitalism was still a form of capitalism. Although he mistakenly saw it as a means of making Socialism possible, even in backward Russia, it was still not Socialism.

Likewise the British version, nationalisation, did nothing to bring about the abolition of the wages system.

It is significant that Marx and Engels themselves explicitly repudiated the passage in **The Communist Manifesto** which advocated nationalisation, graduated income tax and other reforms. Indeed, in his preface to the 1888 English edition, Engels quoted from their joint preface to the 1872 German edition:

The practical application of the principles will depend ... everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing, and, for that reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of section II. That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded today .. But then, the Manifesto has become a historical document which we no longer have the right to alter.

Since authors do not issue such warnings lightly, we think all modern commentators on the **Manifesto** have a duty, in all honesty, to pass on this important caveat to their readers, and we find it odd that Professor McLellan chose not to do so.

Moreover, the very notion of a "socialist state" is simply a contradiction in terms. If, as Marx and Engels argued, the state is a class institution, and Socialism/Communism will be a classless society, there will be no need for a state. It is, we think, high time for so-called Marxists like Professor McLellan to recognise that a society based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution, democratically controlled by and in the interest of the whole community - long advocated by The Socialist Party of Great Britain - has nothing to do with the Leninist concept of a bureaucratic system of state control.

Next, the question of "socialist government" - a strange concept. McLellan feels it is a "weakness of *The Communist Manifesto*, as with other writings by Marx and Engels and subsequent Marxists ... that they have not produced any plausible notion of how a socialist society could be governed, that is what a socialist politics would look like".

But on this point Marx and Engels were quite clear, though perhaps not "plausible" in the Professor's way of thinking.

When ... class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character ... In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

The idea that the future classless society would require any form of government or politics would surely have been utterly alien to Marx's way of thinking.

Political power ... is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat ... by means of a revolution ... sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

The same argument also occurs in **The Poverty of Philosophy**, and was quoted by Engels as late as 1884 (letter to Bernstein):

... the working class will substitute for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism and there will be no more political power - properly so-called since - political power is an exact official summary of the antagonisms in civil society.

And yet we find Professor McLellan complaining that Marx didn't tell us "how a socialist society would be governed, ... what a socialist politics would look like". That is rather as if a modern scientist objected that Einstein's theory of

relativity failed to address the flat earth theory. Poor simple Einstein! Poor shortsighted Marx!

McLellan also informs us that the **Manifesto's** assertion that the "*workers have no fatherland*" was "*too optimistic*". Well, was it?

If you look at this statement in context - rather than lifting it and isolating it from the rest of Marx's argument, this makes even more sense now than it did 150 years ago. "*We cannot take from them what they have not got*"; this point can and should be made whenever workers are called on to "*defend their country*" in some capitalist bloodbath. The fact that all too many workers fall for this sort of propaganda is neither here nor there. At the end of the war, no matter whichever side wins and whichever way the maps are redrawn, the fact is the workers remain exploited wage-slaves, on both sides of the border.

Again, it should not be alleged or implied that in the 1914 'Great War' all Marxists were divided and that all Socialists abandoned internationalism. True, the reformist parties of the Second International did support the war as their successors have subsequent wars, with workers' blood on their hands. But the SPGB has consistently declared that wars are not fought in the interests of the working class.

There is only one safe rule for the working class to follow when urged by the capitalists to support capitalist wars. No matter what form the appeal may take, they should examine the question in the light of working class interests. Ask yourself the question: "Have the working class of one nation any interest in slaughtering (and being slaughtered by) the workers of another? "Have they any material interest in gaining victory or avoiding defeat, in defending frontiers or fighting for national independence?" "Have they any interest in supporting one national section of the capitalist world against another?" To all these questions the answer is NO! (War and the Working Class, SPGB pamphlet, 1936).

Just as in Marx's time, the ideology - "false consciousness" - of nationalism is constantly used to divide the working class. Moreover, it is hardly surprising that, whenever and wherever there are wars, nationalism is aggravated.

Wars have the baneful effect of veiling the class struggle by developing a false sense of identity between exploiters and exploited in each country.

For nearly a century the SPGB has carried on with putting the case for Socialism, basing its principles and policy on the internationalist class struggle thesis which is at the core of **The Communist Manifesto**. In spite of the distortions of modern "experts", socialists find the **Manifesto** to this day a uniquely relevant document.

LECTURE LIST. 2000.

Sunday 23 January
TARIFFS. FREE TRADE OR NO TRADE. C. May.

Sunday 6 February
ART, LABOUR & SOCIETY. Speaker: P. Young.

Sunday 20 February - to be arranged

Sunday 12 March
HAVE THE EMPLOYERS
WON THE CLASS STRUGGLE. Speaker: R. Lloyd.

Sunday 26 March
THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION
AND COMMON OWNERSHIP Speaker: T. D'Arcy.

Marchmont Community Centre,
62 Marchmont Street, London WC1.
(5 mins. Russell Square Tube Station).

Meetings commence 3 p.m.

Questions - Discussion - Admission Free

A STRANGE SORT OF 'SOCIALIST' FUTURE

Surprise, surprise - someone, somewhere out there is planning to bring into being a new 'Socialist' party. They call themselves the "*Movement for a Socialist Future*" and their new party, to be launched any day now (they say in 1999) has, it seems, already got a magazine: **Socialist Future**.

But for us to greet this prospect with a "*welcome, comrades*" would be utterly ridiculous. Just consider the sort of future they advocate.

Q: How would the economy be reorganised?

A: Instead of putting people out of work, new technology will be used to reduce working hours with no loss of pay ...

Q: Will everyone earn the same?

A: No. But the great inequalities that now exist would end ...

So their 'Socialist' future would still be a system in which workers would be selling their labour-power for pay. It is clear that they haven't a clue about the really revolutionary idea that Socialism will mean the abolition of all buying and selling, and that, with the abolition of the wages system, there will be no place in a Socialist society for the buying and selling of human labour-power.

They propose that financial institutions "*like banks, building societies and the pension funds will come under social control with full protection for depositors and contributors. These resources can then be diverted to public projects*".

Clearly this is a bunch of half-baked, opportunistic Leftists who have picked up half-digested ideas which they proceed to regurgitate in a most confusing way. Consider these pension funds. Under capitalism they invest to gain profits from their investments. These profits are then used to pay out pensions, annuities and the like, plus dividends to shareholders. But if Socialist production is "*for need and not for profit*", as this leaflet asserts, how would

pension fund managers find the resources to pay out pensions, let alone to fund all these unspecified "public projects"?

Our would be 'socialists' continue:

Q: Would Socialism abolish the market?

A: ... In a socialist economy, the mechanism of the market would play second place to a plan for the economy. The market will be a means of distributing goods that committees of producers and consumers have decided are needed. If people don't buy the goods, priorities will have to change.

Even with a plan taking precedence over this "market mechanism", it is hard to see how this differs from capitalism. After all, many capitalist states operate with some form of state planning, to control the vagaries of unchecked free market capitalism. This, hardly original, idea is probably a nostalgic harking back to the failed old Leninist-Stalinist dogma of centralised state planning.

As for how their "Socialist Future" could be brought about, on this they are extremely vague and far from convincing. Is it really a step forward that they argue that if there is "mass support for change, the creation of a socialist society could be achieved in a relatively peaceful way, as it is in the interests of the vast majority"?

Probably not since they also argue that it is "necessary to have a revolution - we can't just vote them out". And they offer the usual feeble excuse, ie "History has shown that powerful classes ... do not give up their power without a struggle ...". But as to just how they propose to overthrow the powerful capitalist class, without having first gained control over the state and, with it, the police and armed forces, on this minor technicality they are strangely silent.

Their leaflet comes over as a confused and opportunistic wish list. Almost every topical single issue campaign you could think of is targeted. Reforms galore are promised.

If you're against cruelty to animals, so are they. If you lie awake worrying about admission fees to soccer matches, they share your concern and propose "*prices affordable to all*". They stand for organic food, and housing for all "*at affordable rents*", and benefits and pensions "*to be set at the average wage*", not to mention free entrance to galleries and museums, and a long list of miscellaneous, progressive, reforms.

But we look in vain in this glossy leaflet for any reference to the idea that Socialism will mean the end of buying and selling, with the abolition of the wages system, and the end of the class system.

Their claim that this hotch-potch of proposed reforms amounts to Socialism is pathetic. We are reminded of the fact that, during the last hundred years, every loony Tom, Dick or Hitler has claimed to be Socialist. Even the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, was quoted, possibly when drunk, to the effect that "*We are all Socialists now*". If only!

The challenge today and in the years ahead is to work, not for better benefits, so-called, or cheaper soccer tickets, but for a world of common ownership. A Socialist future is not Socialism unless it is a democratic society where buying and selling, and institutions like banks, building societies and pension funds have disappeared from the scene and, with the abolition of the class system, the wages system too will have been abolished.

We urge the authors of "*Movement for a Socialist Future*" to take a mental laxative and free up their constipated minds. Planned or not, reformed or not, capitalism is always capitalism, and that means exploitation. What their movement offers workers is simply a new label on the bottle: the oldest trick known to quack medicine and the conman.

SAFETY OR PROFIT

The disastrous train crash at Paddington in London in October 1999 - the rail crash itself, plus the horror for the rescue services at having to sift through the remains, the burnt and injured victims and the trauma of the bereaved - will be difficult to forget. This is a tragedy. An avoidable tragedy, which will continue to occur in a capitalist system, which has as its priority the anti-social pursuit of profit and the accumulation of capital.

The Clapham rail disaster in 1988 (when the railways were still nationalised) and the Southall crash in 1997 (when the railways had been privatised) were not one-offs. Capitalist production, which includes transport, has to put profit first. And in putting profit first health, and safety is either a secondary consideration or one conveniently played down because it interferes with making money.

The media and politicians will soon forget the Paddington crash. There will be fresh disasters to visit. Workers who consider themselves at risk should carry cards stating that if injured they do not want parasites like the Prince of Wales visiting them or administrators of the profit system like Tony Blair milking publicity from their discomfort. Workers should also seriously begin to ask themselves questions about the rail system itself. Just in whose interests is it run? What alternatives are there? Why should profit be such an important criterion? Once these questions begin to be asked capitalism itself begins to be questioned and that is something politicians and the rail operators want to avoid at all cost.

It is because all politicians, the Health and Safety Executive, and the train operators work within the anti-social framework of the profit system that talk about placing health and safety as the number one priority is pure cant. Politicians have to say this. They did so after previous disasters and will say the same again after future crashes. This is because they cannot conceive of any social system other than capitalism. This is their job. There will be other

Paddingtons in the future. Yet again empty promises about health and safety will be reeled out. Ironically the crash took place only days after a deadline that Rail Track failed to meet in rectifying known health and safety measures.

Unsurprisingly, people have reacted with angry disbelief. The dangers were all well known. Obviously human error can never be discounted in any social system. However, in a socialist system error would not be as a result of pressures exerted by the need to make a profit. Under capitalism Directors and managers have to pay primary attention to the interests of investors and shareholders. Training for staff has been trimmed. Unqualified and cheaper contractors allowed access to the railways. Staff cuts have taken place. And there is another important distinction between transport provision in capitalism and the form it would take in a Socialist society. That is the fact that in capitalism the train drivers and others who work in the transport system are employees who have no control over how they work, the conditions they are forced to work under and the stress to which they are exposed as they are compelled to perform quicker and more profitably. It was disgusting to see the employers' black propaganda being used by the media to blame the drivers of the trains before the full details were known. Blaming workers has always been the trademark of cowardly employers trying to save their hide and protect the interests of shareholders.

The rail unions and some Labour MPs are calling for nationalisation of the rail system. That did not prevent rail disasters in the past. British Rail operated within the confines of cheapness, cutting back costs, reducing staff levels and giving poor service. Governments did not want to invest because they had other more urgent priorities. The state wanted to move the collective burden of the cost for the train system from the collective capitalist class onto the successful tenderers like Rail Track and the train operating companies in an attempt to bring public spending down. Even now the government heavily subsidises the private sector that run the railways.

Prior to privatisation it was believed that £1 billion needed to be spent on health and safety measures but the proposal was set aside as a criteria for bids so as not to frighten off those companies bidding for the carve-up of British Rail. There could not be a clearer indication of the contempt in which governments hold health and safety. The fragmented anarchy of the present system may be rationalised through imminent legislation but the priority of profit making will remain. The shareholders will sleep easily with their profits. Those directors who will be conveniently sacrificed from Rail Track or the Great Western Railway will find comfortable jobs and six-figure salaries in the City. As we write there have been no resignations. Some individual shareholders have offered to give money to the bereaved but who will still have their circumstances reduced with or without the compensation claims they will obviously pursue. No amount of money can bring back the dead. There is no business ethics in capitalism. It is cruel and unpleasant.

Much of the blame is now being levelled at Rail Track. Capitalism will not be criticised. Neither will the profit motive. There is only one lesson to be learnt. And that is that capitalism cannot be run in the interests of everyone.

Would a Socialist society have avoided introducing a train warning protection system when the technology existed? Would workers have been herded like cattle into early morning commuter trains and transported to a place of exploitation? The answer is no. But then a Socialist society would not be saddled with the profit motive. Meeting human needs will be Socialism's only objective, which would include the best health and safety considerations possible both for workers and the users of transport services.

The priority of profit and the priority of high quality safety, which puts people first, are a contradiction. They cannot be reconciled. This is a truth politicians cannot and will not say because it exposes capitalism to criticism and opens up the door for alternatives like Socialism where high quality safety would be a number one priority. Socialists are not bound by this deliberate suppression of the truth. Until capitalism is abolished and replaced with Socialism, nightmares like Paddington will occur again and again and again.

RAILTRACK'S PRIORITY: PROFIT

According to the **Times** (30 October 1999), Railtrack Directors are set to reject demands for a cut in dividends to fund new safety measures when the company announces record profits. The Railtrack board will show profits of more than £225 million. Profit before safety. Profit before people. This is capitalism. Workers should never have allowed this antisocial system to continue into the 21st century.

FINAL LECTURE OF 1999.

This will be our final lecture for 1999: one of several hundreds held over the century. Can we make this one something special - one to remember.

Sunday 12th December.
1900 - 2000. SOCIALIST LANDMARKS.
Speaker: J. D'Arcy.

Commence 3 p.m.
Marchmont Community Centre

TEN YEARS OF SOCIALIST STUDIES

Socialist Studies was first published in 1989 by Camden and North West London Branches of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. The title of the journal reflected the need for Socialists to deal with some of the fundamental aspects of the Socialist case. Since 1989, when the first issue was published, we have covered the demise of state capitalism in Eastern Europe, wars, the vindictive anti-working class politics of New Labour, economic crises and unemployment, as well as numerous articles on key Socialist ideas such as the necessity for a Socialist majority to gain control of the machinery of government before establishing Socialism.

The journal has largely paid for itself. Articles have been written by members, some of whom, regrettably, are no longer alive. Current writing has been supplemented by classic reprints from the old **Socialist Standard** before its degeneration into a left wing and reformist magazine at the hands of the Clapham Party whose leadership orchestrated our expulsion some two years later in 1991. The old **Socialist Standard** explicitly stated the SPGB's case on the necessity of capturing the machinery of government and the need to be hostile to all political organisations who reject this Socialist principle. This important thread links together the old **Socialist Standard** to **Socialist Studies**. We are also determined to place prominently in our journal the Object and Declaration of Principles of the SPGB as a living manifesto and not reduce it in size so it can only be read under a microscope or give the impression that it is a historic document with no significance to the class struggle as it enters the 21st century.

In the first edition of **Socialist Studies** we made the important point that the Socialist case must be argued and not stated. Socialist propaganda has its origins mainly in the areas of history, economics and politics. Our contribution to political understanding is a direct result of the SPGB's practical experience in the field of political action and not just one based on theory, however useful.

Socialism has to be explained to the working class in a practical way - in simple language, factual, accurate and to the point. This is what we have tried to do.

The production of **Socialist Studies** is a Party effort. Not only are there the writers of the articles, but the typists, those who proof-read, those who liaise with the printer and more importantly those who distribute it to the members of the working class. We know that there is room for improvement but given the current size of the SPGB to publish a journal four times a year is in itself a remarkable feat of collective and comradely endeavour.

Socialist Studies will continue to be published. The foundation has been laid for another ten years. We would like to think that by the time we come to reflect on another decade of publication the political climate might have changed and we will be writing about a vibrant and growing Socialist movement rather than the recurring problems generated by capitalism and the hard and repetitive work of Socialists in persuading workers to organise for its abolition.

ECONOMIC CRISES

With the publication of our 2 Special Supplements these give a socialist analysis of Crises - a normal feature of the capitalist system. As they complement each other we are making a **SPECIAL OFFER**. The published price is £1 each but we will supply the two for £1.50 inc. postage. Send your order and cheque to Head Office.

FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

It seems somewhat strange to be writing what will be the last report of this century, but it is a report of which we can be justly proud. Eight and a half years ago, we were summarily expelled from what was termed The Socialist Party of Clapham, and according to some of their 'leading lights', our shelf life was deemed to be very limited. That their 'leading lights' are now but a flicker, contrasts with our own continued existence and consolidation.

This year has been our best ever for literature sales in many parts of the country, at Meetings, Conferences and Demonstrations. Derby, Blackpool, Bournemouth, Eastbourne, Brighton, Scarborough, Bridlington, London, etc have been targeted by what I might call our 'Mobile sales team'. Things are not always easy or straightforward. Apart from the weather, which can badly affect sales, we have also had to contend with massive security arrangements when the Labour Party and their leader are involved. These various gatherings give us the opportunity of distributing leaflets and copies of our journal. They also enable us to engage in discussion with people, and on the whole the reception we receive is usually courteous and sympathetic. Many disgruntled Labour supporters are unfortunately still unwilling to take the next step and look at a Socialist alternative. Total sales of our pamphlets (to the end of October 1999) amount to £1,065.00. In addition, literature sales to enquirers, through the post, and at our own lectures, come to £230.00.

Our best selling pamphlet is 'Women and Socialism', which is now in its fifth reprint. Another pamphlet 'Marxism in the 21st Century' has been reprinted after just twelve months, and its wider circulation is assured by the fact that the large booksellers - Waterstones and Dillons - now display it in ten of their shops. And we shall increase this coverage in the months to come. It is an indication of our members' abilities and dedication, that we have published 16 pamphlets in the last eight and a half years apart from four issues of our journal each year.

We held seven successful lectures during the first half of the year and we shall be running a new series up to April of next year. Our eighth Summer School in June was one of our best. For the first time, due to our commitments at conferences, etc, we were unable to hold any outdoor meetings in Hyde Park; a good miss some might say, in view of the shambles at Speakers' Corner.

It would be nice to report that our membership has gone up by leaps and bounds, but this we cannot do. Suffice to say that we are still here, making our presence felt. That presence could be extended with the help of a few more willing hands. We do need members and if you agree with our Object and Principles, why not consider applying for membership.

Finally, our subscribers to *Socialist Studies*, and to our many, many sympathisers, we appreciate your help over the past years. Long may it continue. But, instead of just being a sympathiser, you might become a member.

Marxism in the 21st Century

Copies of the pamphlet can now be purchased at the following bookshops.

Waterstone's, 128 Camden High Street, London NW1

Waterstone's, 68-69 Hampstead High Street, London NW3

Dillons Bookstore, 82 Gower Street, London WC1

Waterstone's, 39-41 Notting Hill Gate, London W11

Waterstone's University of Herts, College Lane, Hatfield, Herts AL10

Dillons, Queen Mary & Westfield College, 329 Mile End Road, E1

A wide range of our publications are stocked by
Housemans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1

LITERATURE AVAILABLE

Socialist Studies - our official journal

Issues Nos: 1 - 34 @ 50p each

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The Object and Declaration of Principles
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Banking & Credit Myths

A Socialist View 60p

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THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH

meets at 7.30 pm on the first Monday in the month at
Abbey Community Centre, Belsize Road, London NW6.

Secretary C. May, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road,
London N12 8SB

CAMDEN / BLOOMSBURY BRANCH

meets at 6 pm on the 4th Tuesday of month at
Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, WC1

Correspondence to the Secretary, S.P.G.B., 31 Caernarvon Road,
Eynsbury, St. Neots, Cambs. PE19 2RN (Tel: 01480 403345)

All meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome.
Those wishing to find out more about the Party and its activities
should contact the Secretary.

AUDIO TAPES

We are pleased to offer tapes of the following lectures etc. held
over the past months.

- | | SPEAKER(S) |
|--|----------------------|
| A. WELFARE SYSTEMS. From Poor Law to Pensions. | C. Skelton. |
| B. MARXISM AND THE SINGLE CURRENCY. | J. D'Arcy. |
| C. UNEMPLOYMENT - a global problem. | R. Lloyd. |
| D. WORLD CAPITALISM IN CRISIS. | R. Lloyd. & C. May. |
| E. RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC CRISIS. | J. D'Arcy. |
| F. DEBATE WITH FREEDOM ASSOCIATION.
"The single European currency is of no concern to the workers".
For the SPGB: R. Lloyd. For Freedom Association: G. Hartup | |
| G. SOME THOUGHTS ON CAPITALISM | C. May. |
| H. MARX, BERNSTEIN AND
THE PRECONDITIONS OF SOCIALISM | R. Lloyd. |
| I. SOME ASPECTS OF MARXIAN ECONOMICS | J. D'Arcy, R. Lloyd. |
| J. CAPITALISM'S FAMINES -
AN INCURABLE PROBLEM | C. Skelton. |
| K. ART, LABOUR & SOCIALISM | . D'Arcy |
| L. WAR IN THE CHAOS OF CAPITALISM | |
| M. POLITICS IN THE CHAOS OF CAPITALISM
(These were the subject of our 8th Summer School.
Speakers: R. Lloyd & C. Skelton). | |
| N. THE FUTURE - OUR VISION - OR THEIRS ? | R. Lloyd. |

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THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

ALL ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP TO—

The Socialist Party of Great Britain.

71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB